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INL/FO FOR DAS MCCAMPBELL; INL/LP FOR AMARTIN

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TAGS: [ES](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: DAS MCCAMPBELL LEADS U.S. DELEGATION TO IV ANNUAL TRANSNATIONAL GANG CONVENTION

¶1. Summary: INL Deputy Assistant Secretary Christy McCampbell led the U.S. delegation attending the 4th Annual International Anti-Gang Convention April 8-10, 2008 in Salinitas, El Salvador. DAS McCampbell took advantage of this highly public forum to explain key elements of the proposed Merida Initiative that will impact Central America and to reinforce the U.S. commitment to multilateral and bilateral cooperation in combating transnational gang activity. End summary.

¶2. On April 8th DAS McCampbell attended the opening ceremony of the 4th Anti-Gang Convention. She joined Minister of Public Security and Justice Rene Figueroa and other distinguished guests at the head table and, in her remarks, emphasized U.S. government support for public security initiatives throughout the region. Later in the day, DAS McCampbell again addressed the audience, this time offering a concise explanation of the purpose and potential impact of the Merida Initiative.

¶3. On April 9th, DAS McCampbell traveled to San Salvador to attend several USAID-sponsored gang prevention events. The first was a roundtable of Salvadoran government and private sector NGO officials involved in various anti-gang and violence reduction programs. Each of the representatives shared their experiences and explained the basic objectives and challenges they face in their programs. At the conclusion, DAS McCampbell congratulated the participants on the comprehensive scope of their efforts, and reinforced U.S. support for prevention programs throughout the region. The subsequent event was a site visit to the Don Bosco Industrial Park, where a faith-based NGO conducts rehabilitation and reinsertion programs for youthful offenders and ex-gang members. The Director, Father Jose Maria Moratalla Escudero, gave a tour of the facility and provided a fascinating overview of "lessons learned" in terms of rehabilitation of former gang members. The final event of the day was a reception for the inauguration of "Alianza Joven Regional" (i.e. Regional Youth Alliance), a joint USAID/Central American Integration System (SICA) prevention program. In a concluding press conference chaired by National Civilian Police (PNC) Director Francisco Rovira, DAS McCampbell congratulated the PNC and GOES for organizing four successful annual anti-gang conventions, and reiterated U.S. support for Salvadoran and regional prevention programs.

¶4. On April 10, DAS McCampbell attended the closing ceremony of the Fourth Annual Anti-Gang Convention and participated in a joint press conference along with Vice-Minister Of Public Security Astor Escalante and PNC Director General Francisco Rovira. DAS McCampbell, along with the GOES officials, summarized conference accomplishments and again highlighted their hopes for the pending Merida Initiative.

¶5. Comment: DAS McCampbell's participation in the anti-gang

convention and USAID prevention events generated publicity for U.S. efforts to improve public security in the region, and at the same time reinforced U.S. commitment to democratic policing and governance in El Salvador. Her presence also enabled the USG to personally engage high-level GOES law enforcement and security officials on the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation in the fight against transnational crime. End comment.

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